

# FABLES

**VERTIGO**  
WILLINGHAM  
BUCKINGHAM  
LEIALOHA

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SUGGESTED FOR  
MATURE READERS  
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# Petition Day

Chapter Three of HOMELANDS

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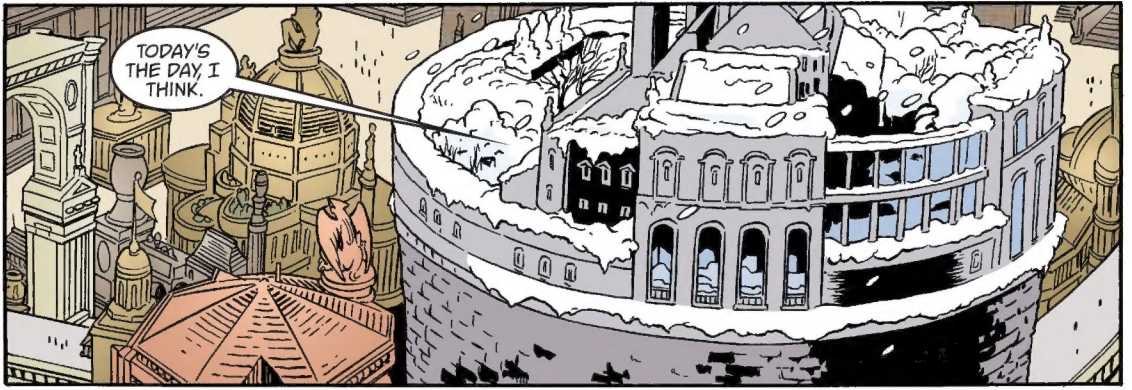
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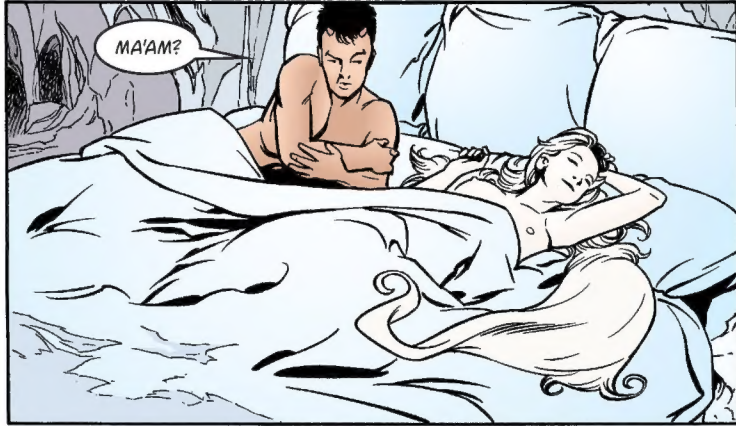


GOOD MORNING, MY GOOD FELLOW. HOW FAR AM I FROM CALABRI ANAGNI?

OH, YOU'VE BEEN INSIDE THE CALABRI ANAGNI DISTRICT FOR SOME TIME NOW, SIR, BUT IF IT'S THE IMPERIAL CITY YOU'RE WANTING, YOU'RE NOT THREE LEAGUES DISTANT FROM IT ON THIS VERY ROAD.



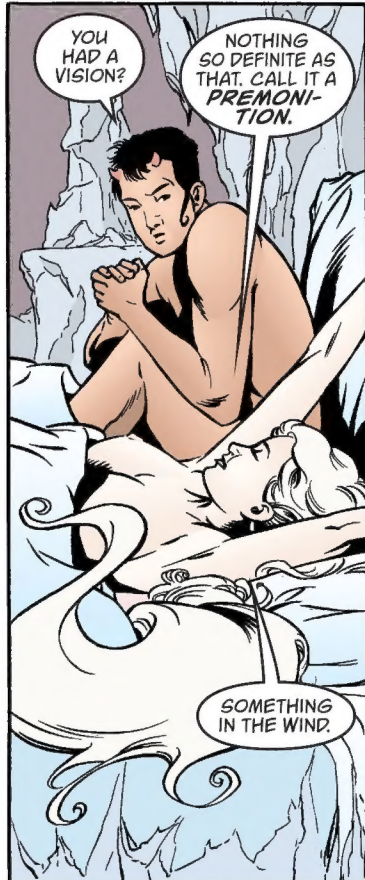
TODAY'S THE DAY, I THINK.



MA'AM?



I BELIEVE THE ASSASSIN WILL STRIKE TODAY.



YOU HAD A VISION?

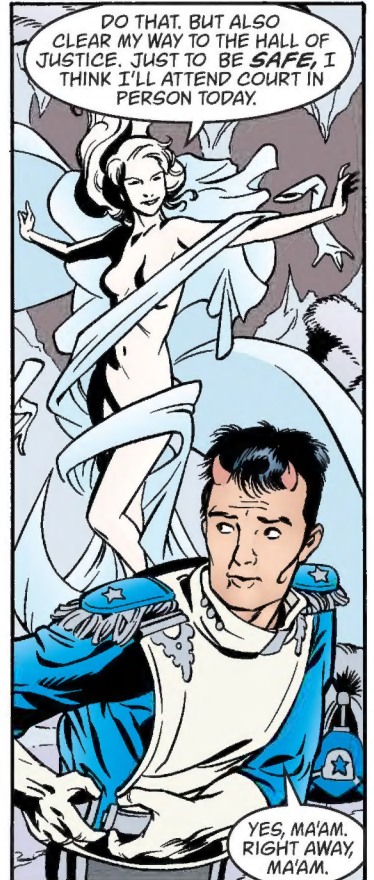
NOTHING SO DEFINITE AS THAT. CALL IT A PREMONITION.

SOMETHING IN THE WIND.



PLUS THIS IS PETITION DAY, THE ONE DAY OF THE MONTH IN WHICH THE ENTIRE POPULACE KNOWS PRECISELY WHERE THE EMPEROR WILL BE.

I'LL ALERT THE WARLOCK GUARD TO BE EXTRA WATCHFUL.



DO THAT, BUT ALSO CLEAR MY WAY TO THE HALL OF JUSTICE. JUST TO BE SAFE, I THINK I'LL ATTEND COURT IN PERSON TODAY.

YES, MA'AM. RIGHT AWAY, MA'AM.



ATTENTION!

ATTENTION!

WINTER IS COMING!



WINTER IS COMING!

WINTER IS COMING!

PREPARE YOURSELF, CITIZEN. WINTER IS--

YEAH, I HEARD. BLOODY HELL.



THE SNOW QUEEN KEEPS INTERRUPTING OUR NICE SUMMER, WHICH INTERRUPTS MY TRADE.



SINCE IT'S BLOODY PETITION DAY, MAYBE I SHOULD PETITION THE BLOODY EMPEROR TO MAKE THE BLOODY GASTRONOMES GUILD ASSIGN ME A BETTER BLOODY SPOT.

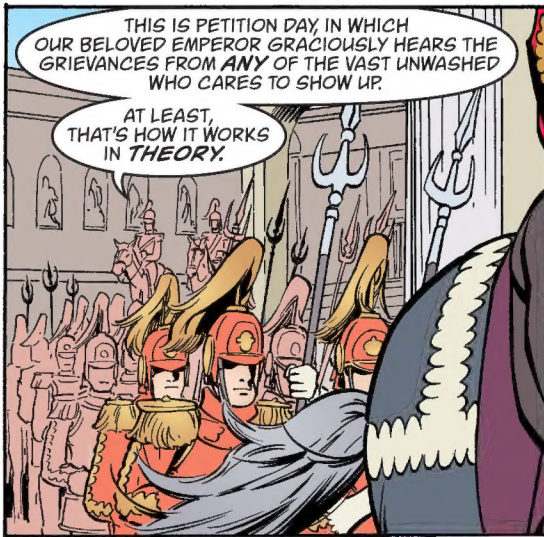
MIND YOUR TONGUE!



YOU'LL SHOW MORE COURTESY TO THE EMPEROR AND THE SNOW QUEEN, OR I'LL LOP YOUR FESTERING HEAD OFF, HERE AND NOW!









BUT YOU'RE EXACTLY *RIGHT*. THE GOOD NEWS IS TWO OF THOSE SLOTS BELONG SOLELY TO THIS GUARD COMPANY.

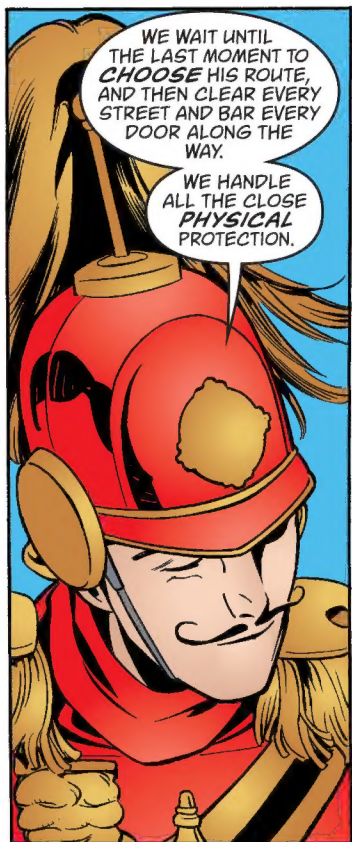
OUR SHARE OF THE *BRIBES* EACH MONTH IS WHY WE HAVE THE FINEST OFFICER'S MESS IN THE CORPS.



SWEET.

INDEED, BUT WE EARN IT.

OUR GUARD POST IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE THE EMPEROR GETS *SAFELY* FROM HIS RESIDENCE TO THE HALL OF JUSTICE.



WE WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT TO *CHOOSE* HIS ROUTE, AND THEN CLEAR EVERY STREET AND BAR EVERY DOOR ALONG THE WAY.

WE HANDLE ALL THE CLOSE *PHYSICAL* PROTECTION.



SPELL PROTECTION AND LONG DISTANCE WARDING IS HANDLED BY THE WARLOCK GUARD--MAY GOD *ROT* EVERY ONE OF THOSE BLUE-COATED COCKSUCKERS.

IT'S STRESSFUL DUTY, BLOOM, AND GOD HELP ANYONE WHO MAKES THE SLIGHTEST *ERROR*.

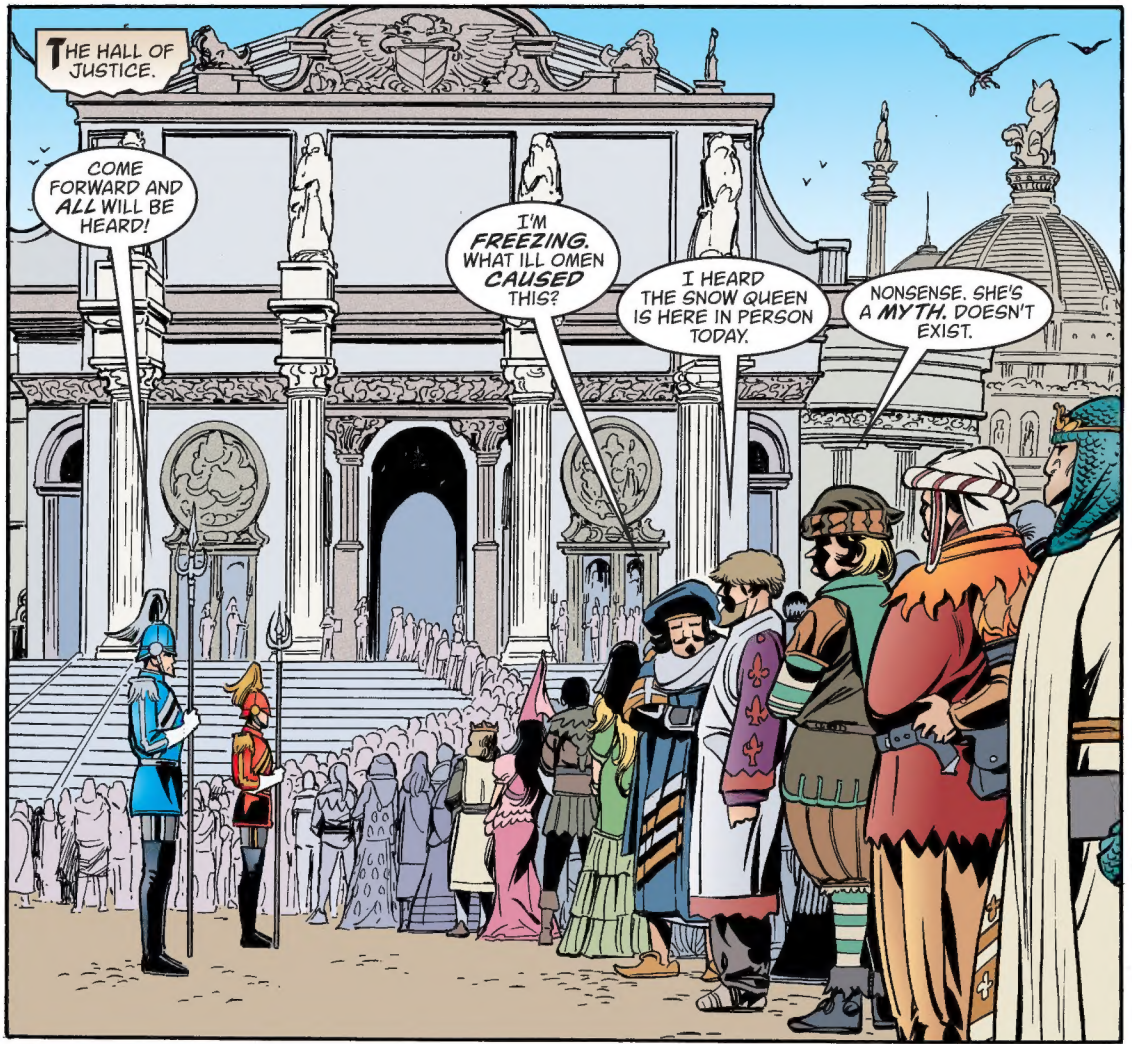


SO I'M GOING TO *MEET* THE EMPEROR TODAY?

YOU'LL SEE HIM. BUT NOBODY TALKS TO HIM--NOT UNLESS YOU WANT TO *PAY* YOUR FEE AND GET IN LINE, LIKE EVERY OTHER SAD SACK OF SHIT.







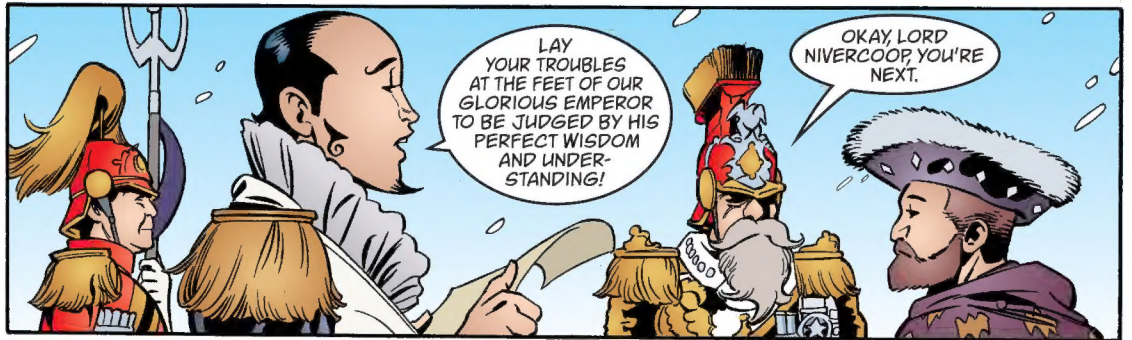
THE HALL OF JUSTICE.

COME FORWARD AND ALL WILL BE HEARD!

I'M FREEZING. WHAT ILL OMEN CAUSED THIS?

I HEARD THE SNOW QUEEN IS HERE IN PERSON TODAY.

NONSENSE. SHE'S A MYTH. DOESN'T EXIST.



LAY YOUR TROUBLES AT THE FEET OF OUR GLORIOUS EMPEROR TO BE JUDGED BY HIS PERFECT WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING!

OKAY, LORD NIVERCOOP, YOU'RE NEXT.

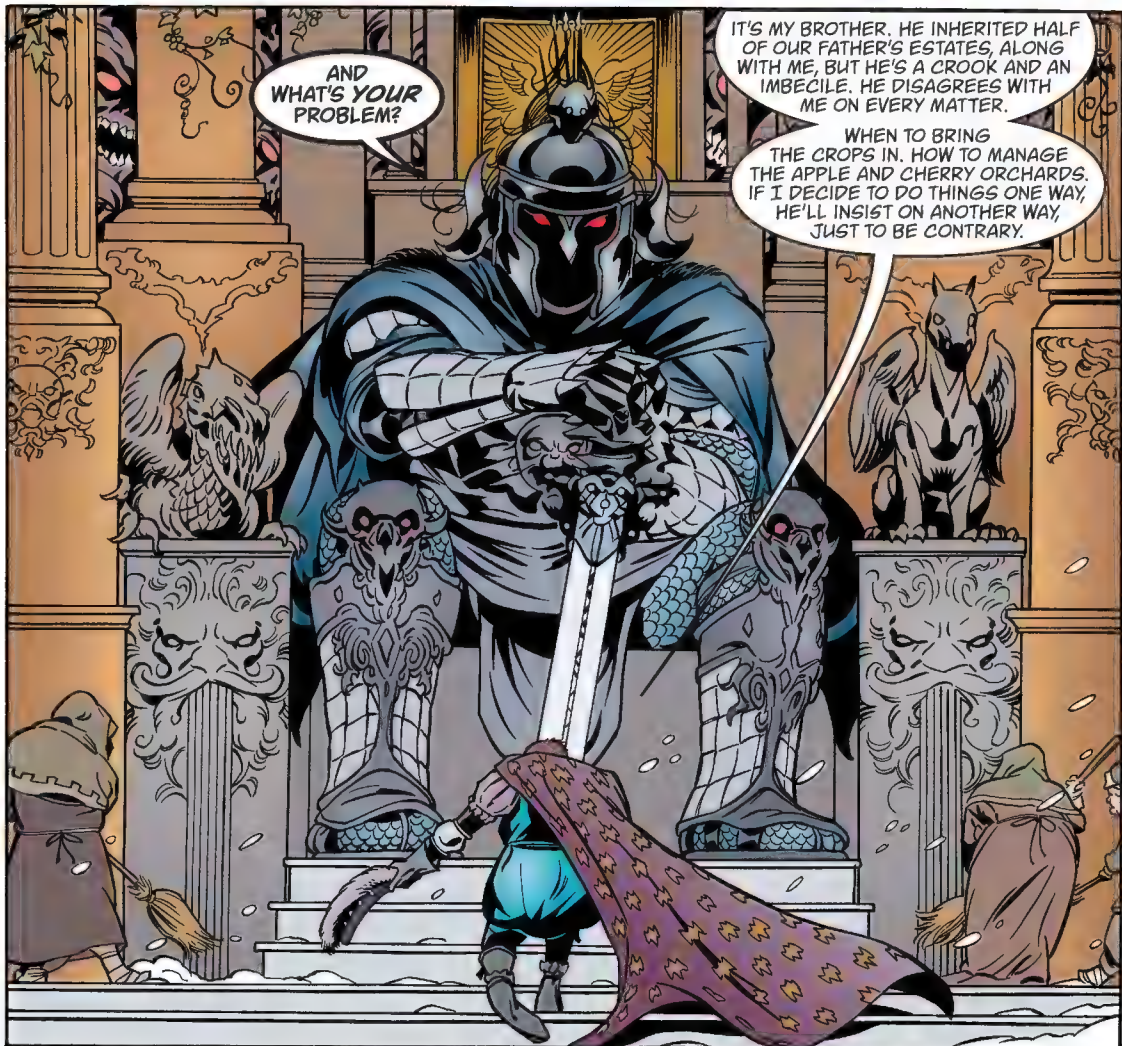
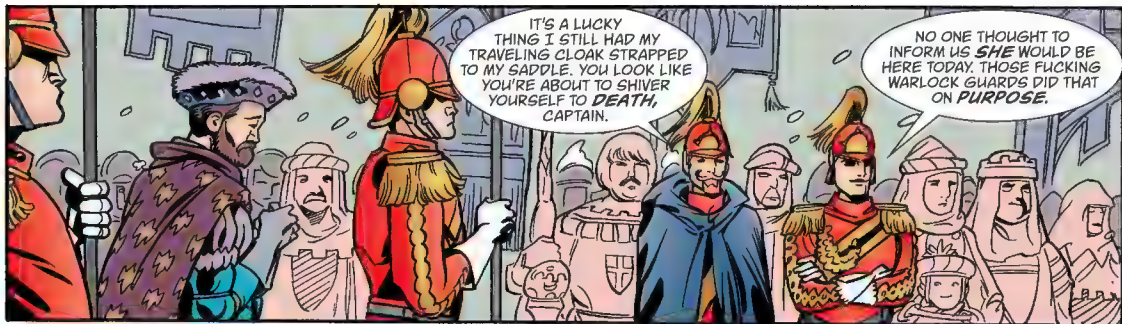


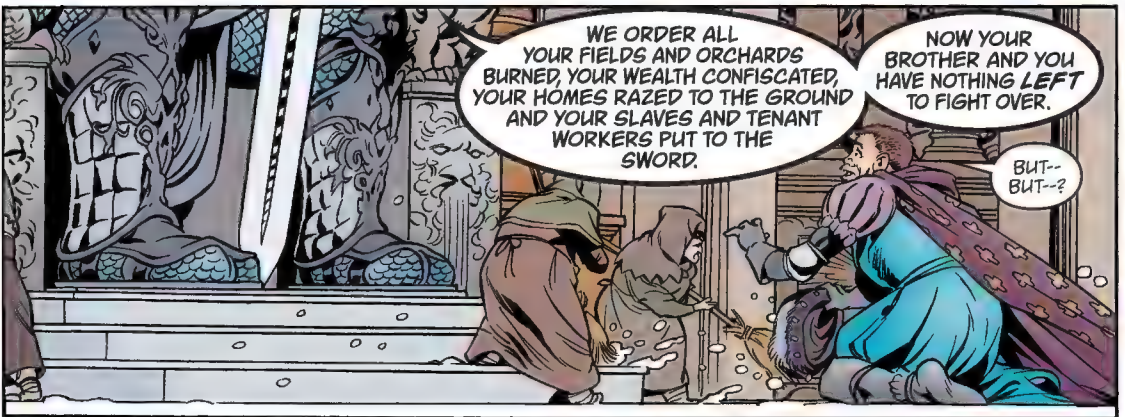
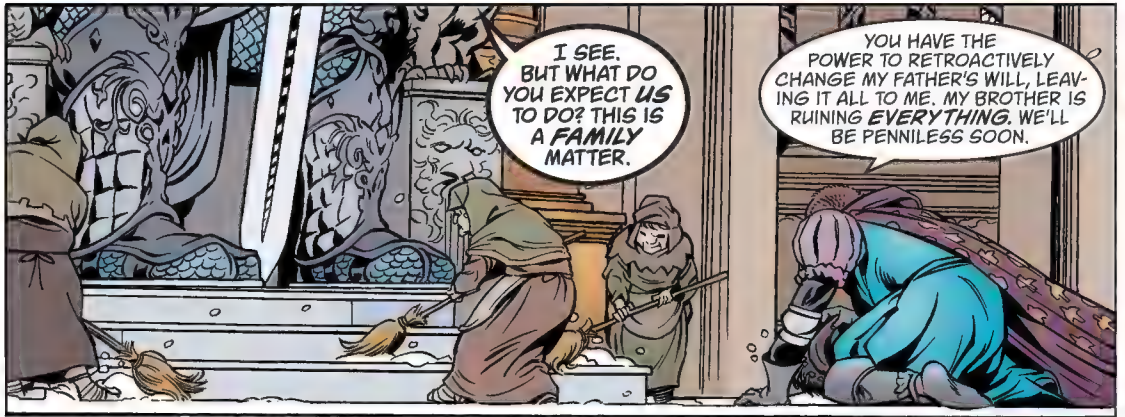
FOLLOW YOUR GUARD ESCORT INTO THE HALL, STOP WHEN HE STOPS, AND IMMEDIATELY HIT YOUR KNEES.

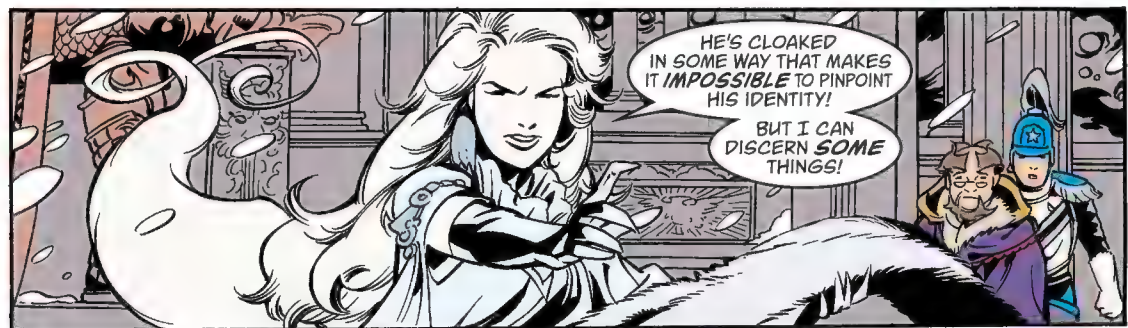
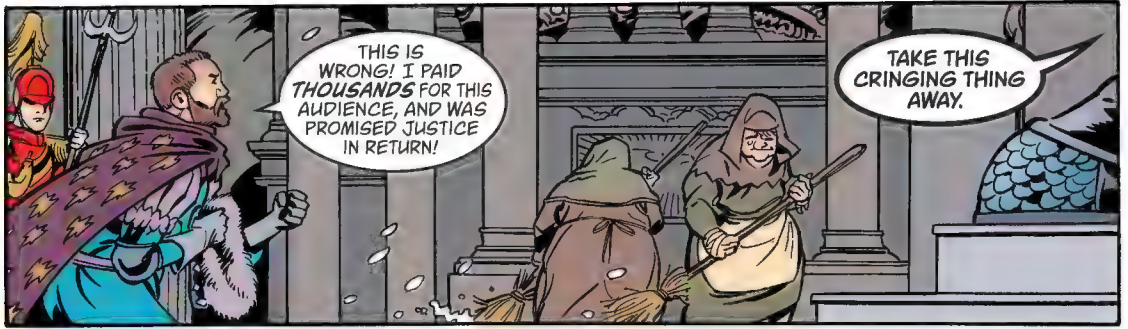
DON'T SPEAK UNTIL SPOKEN TO AND MAKE YOUR ANSWERS SHORT AND TO THE POINT. AND KEEP YOUR HEAD BOWED. NEVER LOOK DIRECTLY AT HIM.

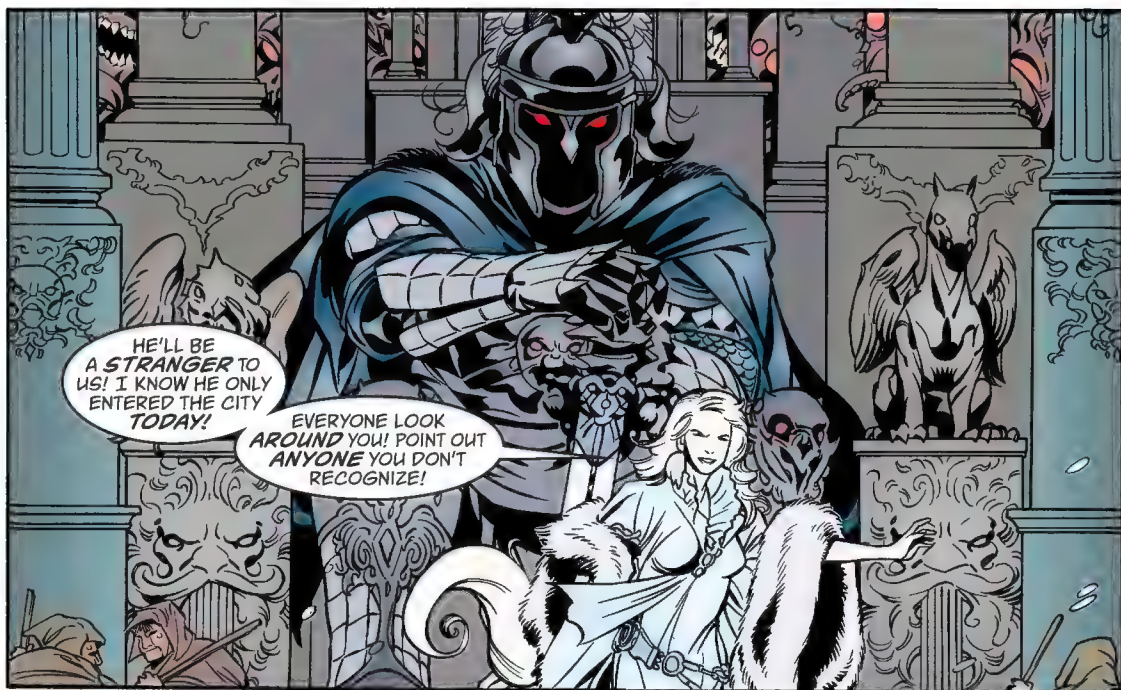


LET THE  
NEXT PETITIONER  
APPROACH AND BE  
HEARD!









HE'LL BE A STRANGER TO US! I KNOW HE ONLY ENTERED THE CITY TODAY!

EVERYONE LOOK AROUND YOU! POINT OUT ANYONE YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE!



LIEUTENANT BLOOM?

CAPTAIN?



YOU ARRIVED ONLY THIS MORNING-- A TRANSFER FOR WHICH I RECEIVED NO ADVANCE NOTICE. HIGHLY IRREGULAR.

DUE TO EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES I'VE ALREADY EXPLAINED, SIR.



AND AS I RECALL, YOU EXPRESSED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN GETTING CLOSE TO THE EMPEROR.

NO, SIR! NOT THE WAY YOU MAKE IT SOUND.

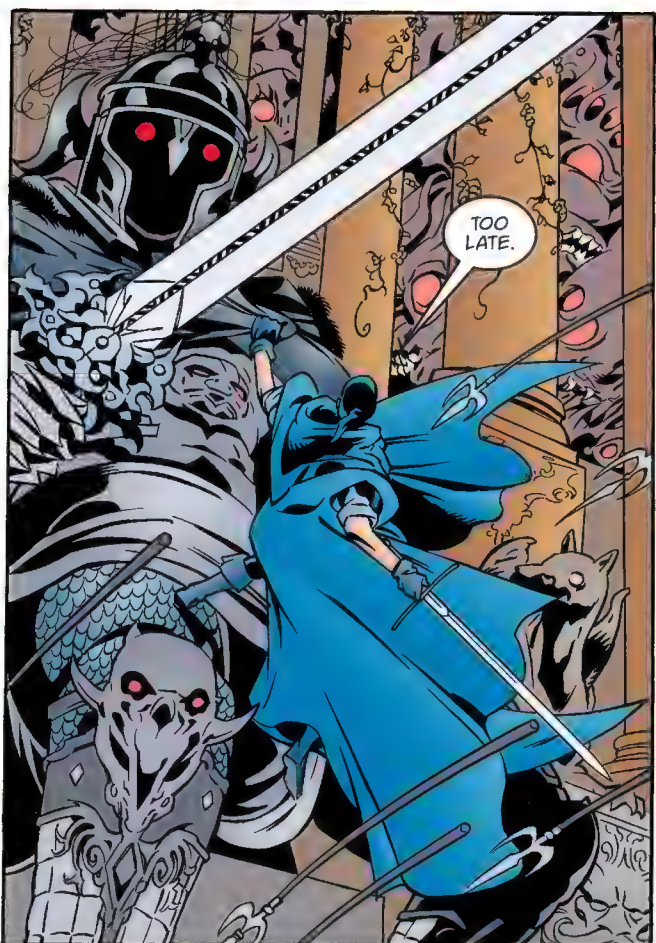
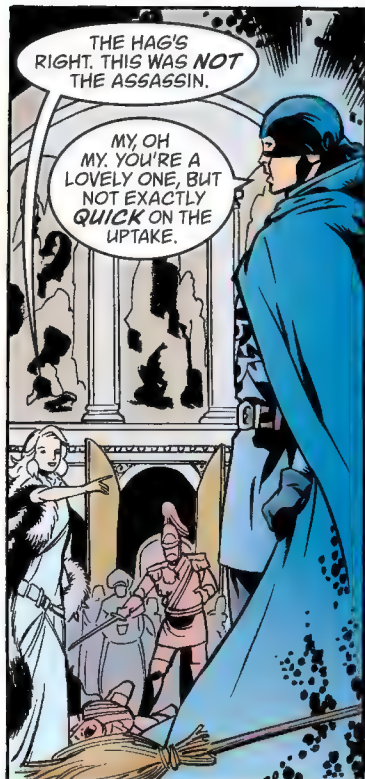
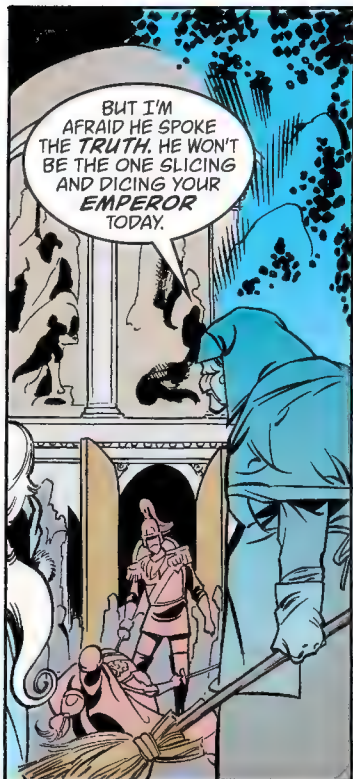


I MERELY EXPRESSED MY AWE AT THE PROSPECT OF MEETING HIM--AS ANYONE WOULD.

I WAS AMAZED AND HONORED THAT I WAS CHOSEN TO BE NUMBERED AMONG HIS IMMEDIATE PROTECTORS.

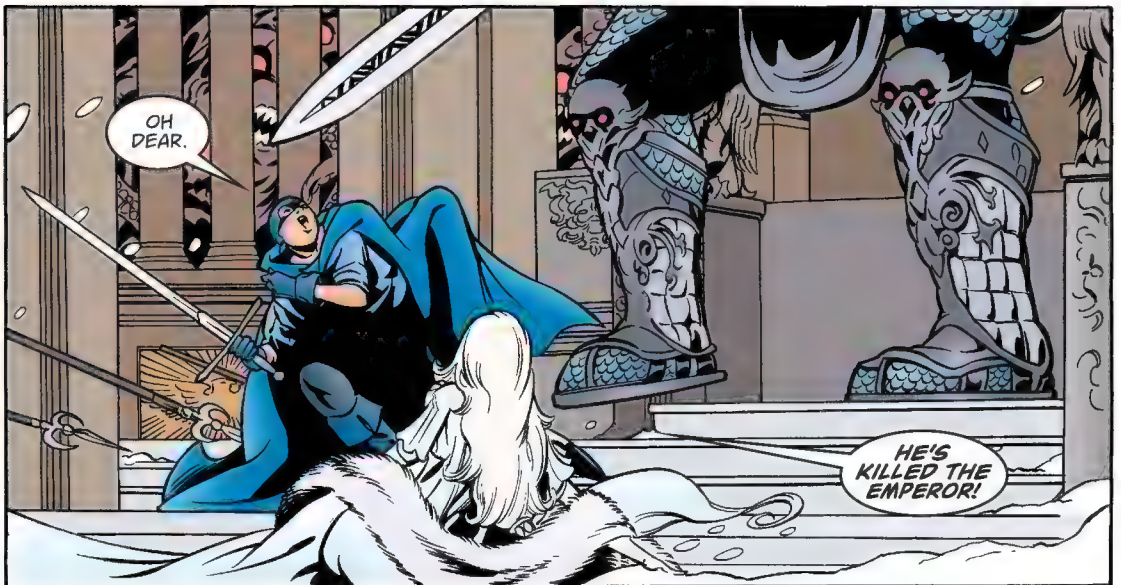
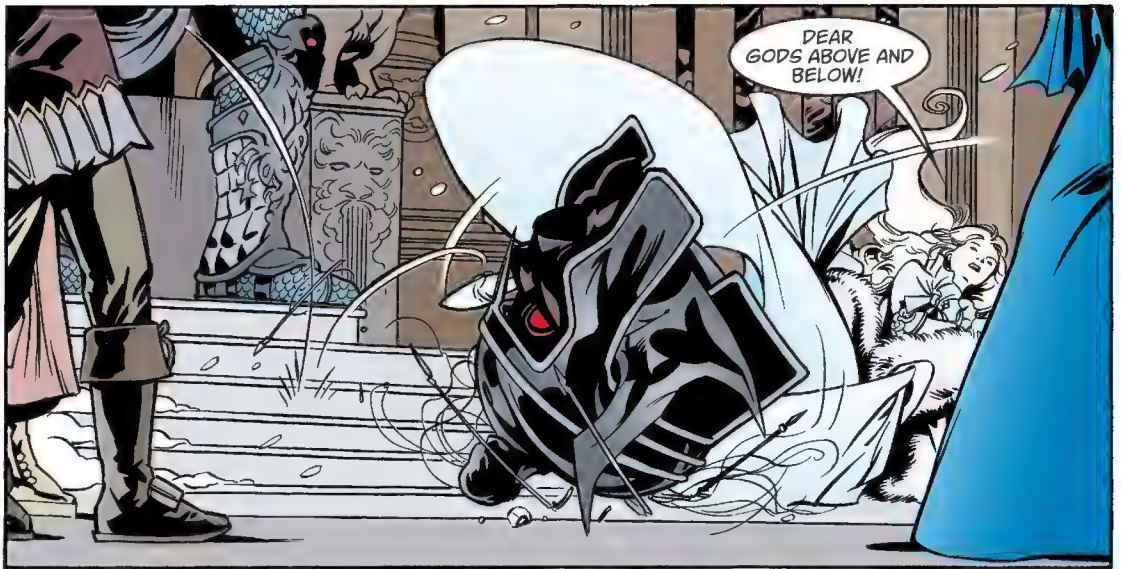


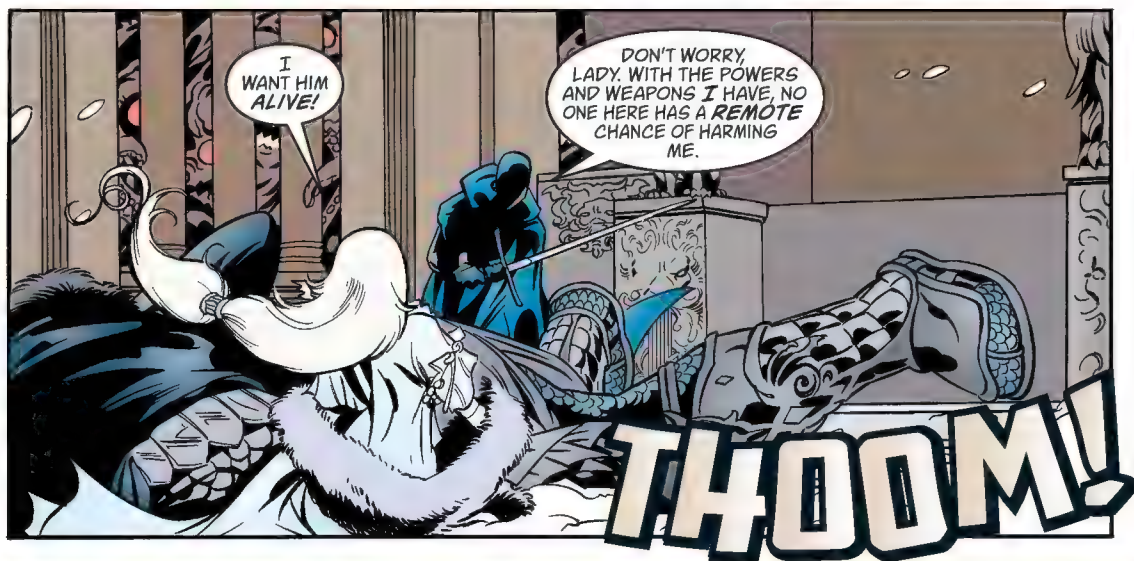


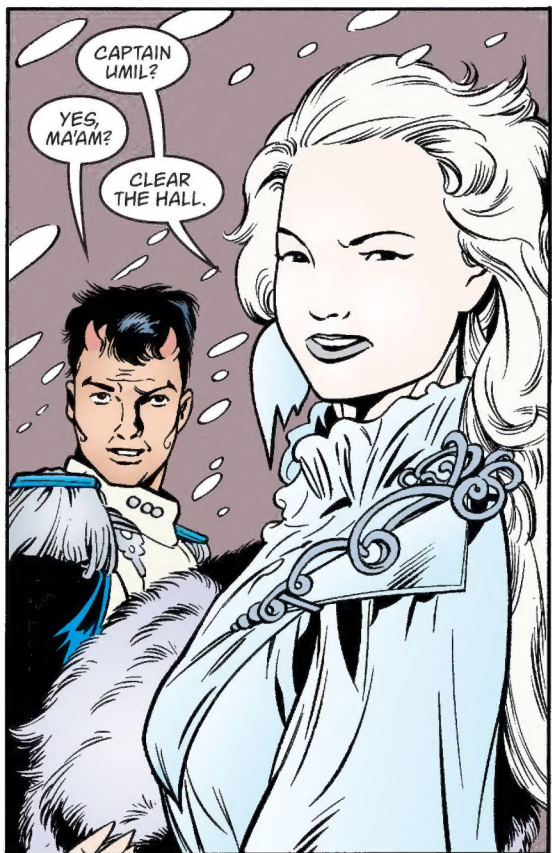


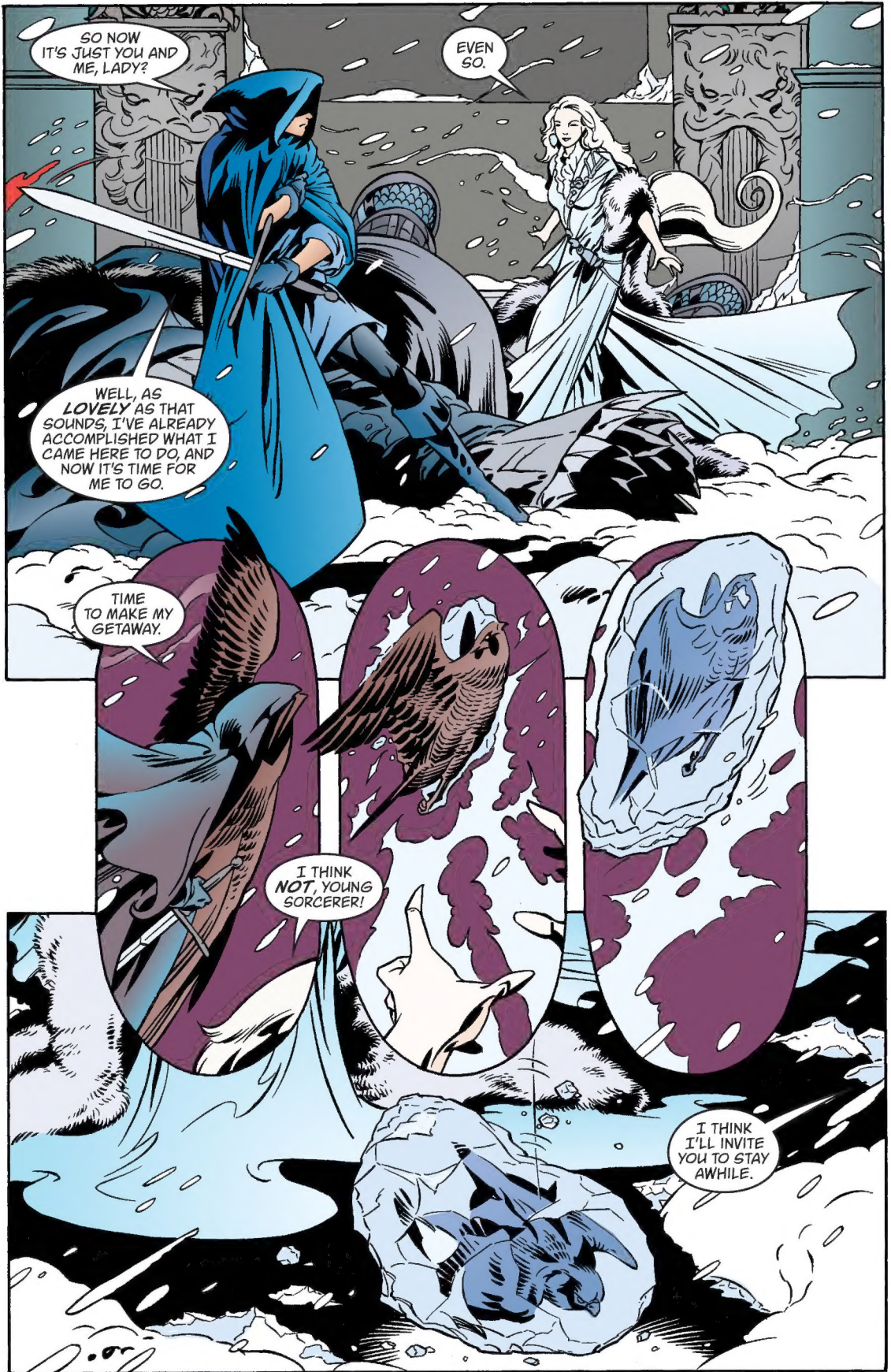
**SNICKER-  
SNACK!**











SO NOW  
IT'S JUST YOU AND  
ME, LADY?

EVEN  
SO.

WELL, AS  
**LOVELY** AS THAT  
SOUNDS, I'VE ALREADY  
ACCOMPLISHED WHAT I  
CAME HERE TO DO, AND  
NOW IT'S TIME FOR  
ME TO GO.

TIME  
TO MAKE MY  
GETAWAY.

I THINK  
**NOT**, YOUNG  
SORCERER!

I THINK  
I'LL INVITE  
YOU TO STAY  
AWHILE.

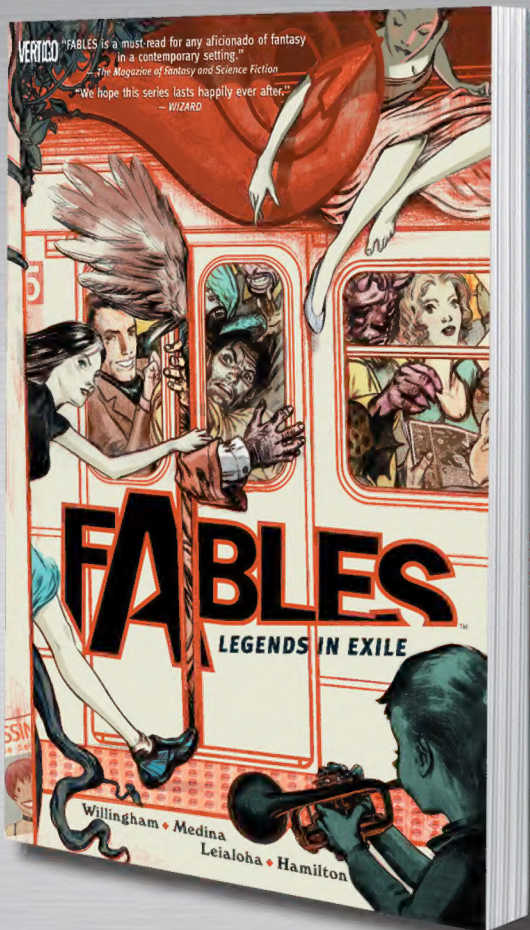
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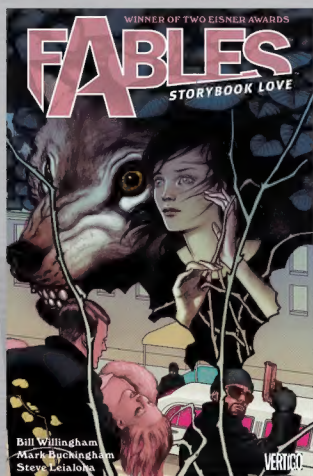
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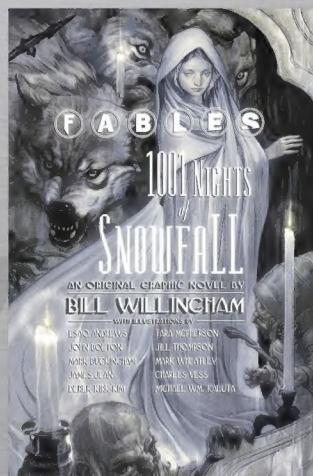
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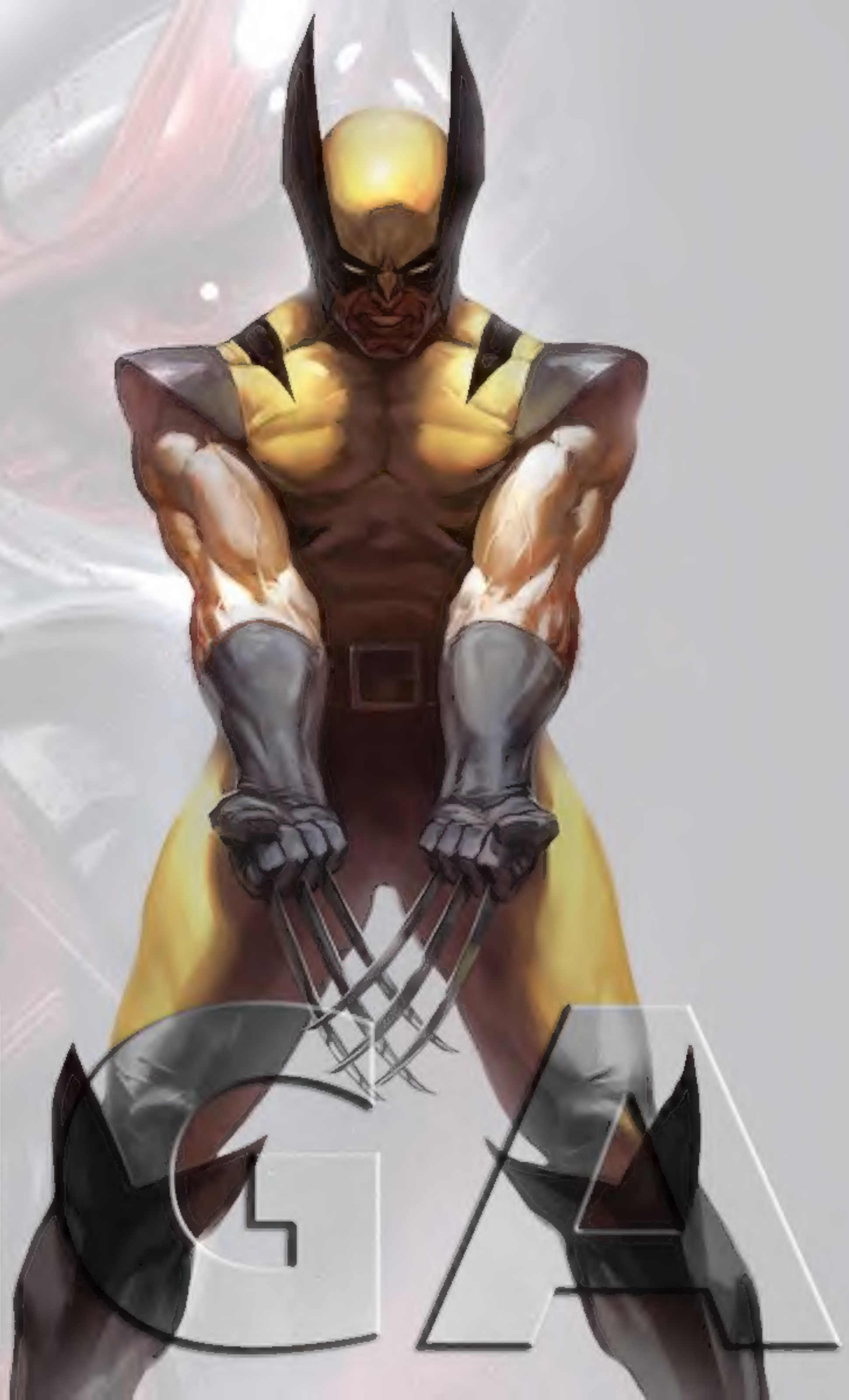


FABLES:  
1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



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